
PART R
SAFETY COLOR CODING; ACCIDENT PREVENTION SIGNS AND TAGS

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WAC 296-307-330 Safety color coding; accident prevention signs and tags.

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WAC 296-307-33001 What definitions apply to this section? “Accident prevention sign” (“sign”) means a surface with text or pictographs, meant to warn or instruct employees who may be exposed to hazards. Safety posters and education bulletins are not included in this definition.

“Accident prevention tag” (“tag”) means a card that identifies a hazardous condition, generally related to unsafe equipment.

“Major message” means the sign’s or tag’s text that is more specific than the signal word and that identifies the specific hazardous condition or safety instruction. Examples include: “High Voltage,” “Close Clearance,” “Do Not Start,” or “Do Not Use” or a corresponding pictograph.

“Pictograph” means a pictorial representation that identifies a specific hazardous condition or safety instruction.

“Signal word” means the sign’s or tag’s text that contains the word, usually “danger” or “caution” that is intended to capture the employee’s immediate attention.

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WAC 296-307-33003 What does red identify in safety color coding? Use red to identify:

- (1) Fire protection equipment;
- (2) Safety cans or other portable containers of flammable liquids;
- (3) Danger signs and tags;
- (4) Emergency stop bars on hazardous machines; and
- (5) Stop buttons or electrical switches used to stop machinery in an emergency;

Red lights must be provided at barricades and at temporary obstructions, as specified in ANSI Safety Code for Building Construction, A10.2-1944.

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WAC 296-307-33005 What does yellow identify in safety color coding? Use yellow to identify:

- (1) Caution signs and tags; and

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(2) Physical hazards.

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WAC 296-307-33007 When should signs and tags use “danger” versus “caution”?

(1) Danger signs and tags.

- (a) Use danger signs and tags when an immediate hazard presents a threat of death or serious injury to employees.
- (b) Instruct all employees that danger signs and tags indicate immediate danger and that special precautions are necessary.

(2) Caution signs and tags.

- (a) Use caution signs and tags to warn against potential hazards or to caution against unsafe practices.
- (b) Instruct all employees that caution signs and tags indicate a possible hazard against which proper precaution should be taken.

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WAC 296-307-33009 What are the design and color specifications for accident prevention signs?

- (1) All signs must have rounded or blunt corners and be free from sharp edges. The ends or heads of bolts or other fastening devices must be located so that they do not constitute a hazard.
- (2) Danger, caution, directional, informational, exit, and safety instruction signs must comply with the specification of safety colors of the ANSI Z53.1-1971.

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WAC 296-307-33011 What are the proper uses of accident prevention tags?

- (1) Use tags as a temporary means of warning employees of a hazardous condition, especially defective equipment. Tags are not a complete warning method, but should be used until the hazard can be eliminated.

For example: You may use a “do not start” tag on power equipment for a short time until the switch in the system can be locked out; you may use a “defective equipment” tag on a damaged ladder while arrangements are made for the ladder to be taken out of service and repaired.

(2) Use of accident prevention tags.

- (a) Use tags as a warning to prevent accidental injury or illness to employees who are exposed to hazardous or potentially hazardous conditions, equipment or operations that are out of the ordinary, unexpected or not readily apparent.
- (b) Use tags until the identified hazard is eliminated or the hazardous operation is completed. Tags are not necessary if signs, guarding, or other protection is used.
- (c) Place “do not start” tags in a conspicuous location and, if possible, so that they block the starting mechanism that would cause hazardous conditions if the equipment was energized.

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- (3) General accident prevention tag specifications.
 - (a) Tags must contain a signal word and a major message. The signal word must be either “danger” or “caution.”
 - (b) The signal word must be readable at least five feet from the hazard.
 - (c) The signal word and the major message must be understandable to all employees who may be exposed to the identified hazard.
 - (d) Inform all employees of the meaning of the tags used throughout the workplace and what special precautions are necessary.
 - (e) Attach tags as closely as is safely possible to the hazard. Attach the tags so as to prevent loss or unintentional removal.
 - (f) The tag and attachment method must be constructed of material that is not likely to deteriorate.
- (4) You may use warning tags to represent a hazard level between “caution” and “danger,” instead of the required “caution” tag, if they have a signal word of “warning” and an appropriate major message.
- (5) Use “out of order” tags only to indicate that a piece of equipment, machinery, etc., is out of order and that it might present a hazard if used.

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